

Waste-to-energy anger

By Danielle Kutchel

A community conference on the proposed waste-to-energy plant in Dandenong South has been slammed as "insincere and meaningless" by City of Greater Dandenong councillor Matthew Kirwan.

Cr Kirwan and colleague Maria Sampey were among around 100 concerned residents who packed a council meeting room for the conference on Tuesday 3 March.

Those attending discussed some of the key issues to come out of the submissions that were made by the public in response to Great Southern Waste Technologies' proposal for a \$15 million plant at 70 Ordish Road, Dandenong South.

A total of 79 submissions were made in response to the proposal via the Engage Victoria website earlier this year; 76 raised concerns or directly objected to the proposal.

Cr Sampey told the Journal she was confused about the purpose of the conference.

"Why are they asking us to ask the questions?" she said.

"It isn't the people attending who are doing the investigation.

"What is the EPA going to achieve through this consultation?"

She said she had attended the event expecting to hear more information from the EPA regarding the similar use of the waste-to-energy technology in Europe.

"I wanted information, and they're not giving us information," she said.

Cr Kirwan said he too was disappointed with the way the evening had progressed, and suggested a better way of conducting the evening would have been to simply take questions from the floor.

There was no shortage of questions when the audience was given the microphone for a brief period prior to the meeting's end, with



Residents packed the room for the event.

attendees querying the age of the technology being introduced, the potential environmental impacts and emissions of the plant, the impacts on air quality and the chosen location.

"From the heart of a community member ... to the applicants, take the community concerns into your consideration and prioritise, and take a look at some of the failed cases around the world, not only the good case studies," one resident begged.

While not every question was given an answer or response on the night, the queries were recorded by the EPA.

Representatives of the EPA insisted on the night that there was "no rush" to get the project through, and that they would ensure prop-

er processes were followed and requirements met should the plant be approved.

Nadir Yildiz, head of college at Mt Hira College, said he was concerned about the effects of the plant on air quality and pollution, and about the possibility of the plant's software being hacked or manipulated.

"I'm sick of fighting these people," he said.

"Every time bad industry comes to Dandenong, we have to fight, and it's costing the community."

The proposed plant would be located approximately 1.5 kilometres away from the College and its 610 students.

Keysborough resident Helen said the loca-



Cr Kirwan and Cr Sampey were unimpressed with how the event played out.

tion should be "crossed out".

She and several other residents are mobilising as a group to continue fighting the proposal.

A spokesperson for the EPA said they appreciated the community's concern.

"The conference showed the high level of interest from the local community about the proposed waste to energy facility in Dandenong South," said EPA manager southern metro region Marleen Mathias.

"From here, an independent report will be produced and made available on the engage.vic.gov.au website.

"EPA will use all this information in its assessment of the Works Approval application to make a final decision."

According to its submission to the Environment Protection Authority Victoria, GSWT seeks to use gasification technology to process 100,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste and commercial and industrial waste each year.

It would generate 7.9 megawatts of electricity to be fed into the grid, enough to power about 7000 homes according to Great Southern, using technology from Norwegian company Energos.